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**Some guidelines for writing a book review**

The first thing to do is to read at least five serious professional book reviews of the type that appear in *Comparative Political Studies*. You are interested in 3-5 page book reviews, not the extremely brief comments on books that appear in some outlets.

A book review should contain at least the following elements:

1. A review of the argument
  - A clear specification of the research question asked
  - Specification of the dependent variable and the scores on the cases
  - A brief, to-the-point, synopsis of the argument and any needed explanation of how the argument makes predictions about the scores that the DV should take on under particular conditions.
  - A discussion of the empirical tests offered, including the type of data, the cases tested, and the conclusions reached
  - You may also, at your discretion, discuss conceptualization and measurement of particularly tricky or contested concepts
2. A critique of the argument
  - Place the argument in the literature if you haven't already done so above (i.e., is in institutionalist, rationalist, culturalist, structuralist, behavioralist, or some combination of these)
  - Assess whether the argument is logically coherent
  - Assess whether the predictions are plausible
  - Assess the quality of the empirical tests, paying particular attention to the basic criteria for causality (correlation, time order, causal mechanism, and the absence of confounds).
  - Remember that you need not critique elements that are unimportant
3. Commentary on the arguments implications
  - What are the argument's implications for theory, for broader outcomes of interest in political science, for the cases studied by the author, or for other cases that you care about (i.e., does the argument extend).

These elements need not be in the order outlined here. In fact, they probably won't work very smoothly or naturally in this rigid order.

This list is off-the-top of my head and may not be exhaustive.

Two last items:

- a) Avoid hollow evaluative statements such as "I liked this book" or "This book is interesting"
- b) Make sure that the final product is something that would hold your attention if you read it in a journal and transmitted helpful information in an efficient manner.